

HOW TO USE THE “INTERAGENCY FIRE PROGRAM MANAGEMENT QUALIFICATIONS STANDARDS AND GUIDE”

The “Interagency Fire Program Management Qualifications Standards and Guide” includes:

- ◆ this “Introduction” section
- ◆ “Minimum Qualifications Standards”
- ◆ “OPM Standards” for GS-401, -455, and -462 Series
- ◆ “Positions Standards and Guide” for each position, including minimum qualifications standards, common and position competencies, employee developmental training, and key performance elements.
- ◆ “Training for Designated Agency Managers”
- ◆ “Program Complexity Descriptors”
- ◆ Consolidated “Common Competencies” for all positions

All components of this “Standards and Guide” are complementary to each other and intended to be used together.

Guiding principles, assumptions and instructions specific to these components are included at the front of each section.

In general terms, a unit would first evaluate its program for complexity against the “**Program Complexity Descriptors**” and determine whether it rates a “Low”, “Moderate”, or “High” complexity. This might also be done by managers at the geographic or national levels, for consistency in interpreting descriptors between units.

The identified level of complexity then leads one to the minimum qualifications standards and minimum recommended grade level for the Fire Program Manager of that unit. Subordinate positions’ minimum standards and grade levels are determined in other ways. (See “**NOTE**,” p. 6-3 of “Instructions and Guiding Principles for Use of the Complexity Descriptors”—located behind the “Program Complexities” tab.)

The “**Competency Descriptors**” should be reviewed for the subject position(s) in question. Competencies are described in terms of three “Expertise Levels” (“working”, “journey”, and “expert”). The appropriate level of expertise for that particular competency is indicated under the appropriate level of complexity.

Note: The “working” level of expertise identified in the “Competency Descriptors” is defined as the minimum level of experience and/or training that it takes to produce work of acceptable quality and meet safety standards. It is **not** intended that a prospective job applicant have all the defined competencies in their entirety when first selected for any position at any level (unless for some reason, the employing unit so chooses, and indicates same in a vacancy announcement). It **is** intended that the employee achieve all indicated competencies before being considered at a full performance level. Timelines

for achieving full performance level standards should be specified in vacancy announcements and other personnel documents.

The **IFPM Minimum Qualifications Standards** are used in a variety of ways.

- ◆ For identifying minimum qualifications on vacancy announcements
- ◆ For identifying OPM series standard requirements
- ◆ For identifying NWCG Incident Management Qualifications requirements
- ◆ For identifying “additional required training” for a position, beyond that required for NWCG Incident Management Qualifications
- ◆ As guides for employees when constructing Employee Development Plans for future positions

“Additional Required Training” identifies training that is required prior to being considered qualified for a position. It cannot be challenged. An agency equivalent course may be used as a substitute when that course meets or exceeds a required course’s learning and performance objectives.

“Employee Development Training” identifies training that assists an employee in meeting position competencies, in addition to training that is required. It is recognized that training is not the only way of obtaining competencies, but the identified courses do provide many, though not necessarily all, of the knowledge and skills needed to meet position competencies.

The “Common Competency Descriptors for All Positions” is intended to supplement each position “Competency Descriptor.” They are competencies needed for most positions. Employees obtain these “Common Competencies” through personal education and experiences, through agency orientation and mission renewal programs, and through interaction with peers, teams, and supervisors.

These “Competency Descriptors/Common Competency Descriptors” are used in a variety of ways.

- ◆ Constructing Employee Development Plans
- ◆ Evaluating employee performance

The “Standard Key Performance Elements” are to be used to evaluate employee performance, in conjunction with “Competency Descriptors.” These “Performance Elements” are defined as a mission-based outcome or end product that is essential to overall success of the position. Not surprisingly, these “Performance Elements” are derived from the major elements of the “Competency Descriptors.”

A chart is found within the section tabbed as “Training for Agency Managers” detailing required and recommended training for various levels of agency administrators, fire program managers, and other agency managers of the five federal wildland fire management agencies.